

JOHN GARRETT, EDITOR
17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$5.00

No. 3

Twenty-fourth Year

January 25, 1957

On other pages

"The Voice of Prayer..."	US and British Churches Exchange	
Moravian Anniversary..... 2	Letters..... 3	
Challenges to Prof. Hromadka's View of	Czech Brethren Summon Congregations	
the Hungarian Crisis..... 2	to Pray and Act for Peace..... 5	

SPAINApplication for Civil Marriage under New Decree Refused

In the first application for a civil marriage to be filed since the Spanish Government issued its new decree last October (see EPS No. 48, 1956), a Baptist minister and his fiancée have been refused a permit.

The new decree states that Spanish couples seeking permission to contract civil marriage must prove that they do not profess the Roman Catholic religion, submitting signed declarations to this effect and an affidavit as to their reasons for desiring to celebrate their marriage in this form. They must also provide certificates showing where each has resided during the last two years.

The application, which was lodged with the municipal official of Villaverde, declared that the couple did not profess the Catholic religion. The cause was referred for an opinion to the local diocese of the Roman Catholic Church.

A reply signed by the Archbishop of Madrid-Alcala said: "In spite of the fact that the applicants declare they have abandoned the Roman Catholic Church, although they certify that they were baptized, they cannot validly contract marriage except in its canonical form." The Archbishop then cites a provision of canon law which says that non-Roman Catholics who were baptized in the Roman Catholic Church and also lapsed converts to Catholicism, must observe the requirements of canonical marriage. The Archbishop's document says the Concordat of 1953 between Spain and the Holy See requires canonically valid marriage in such cases.

The couple are considering the possibility of appealing against the decision of the municipal authority. E.P.S., Geneva

FRANCERoman Catholic Magazine Presents Ecumenical Movement

(Lyons) - A special issue of the Roman Catholic illustrated publication Missi, timed to appear before the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, from January 18-25, (see EPS No. 45, 1956, EPS No. 1, 1957), featured an article asking how Roman Catholics can find their appropriate place within the ecumenical movement.

The article, written by Father Maurice Villain, a contributor to one of the preparatory volumes for the World Council of Churches' inaugural Assembly in 1948, says: "Catholics can and should become part of the ecumenical movement, in the same way as other Christians. That is what we should wish to show by using a vocabulary which is valid for all Christians."

"By seeking a way of getting into touch with their separated brethren," says the writer, who prepared the special issue of the magazine, "Catholics certainly intend to remain true to pure doctrine and are not to go beyond the limits of their own discipline."

In several fully illustrated historical and evaluative surveys other pages objectively report the origins and evolution of the World Council of Churches. Missi, which calls itself a magazine of spiritual information and international solidarity, is published in Lyons by an editorial group representative of sixteen Roman Catholic religious orders.

E.P.S., Geneva

GERMANY

"The Voice of Prayer is Never Silent"

(Herrnhut) - The Moravian Church is celebrating its 500th anniversary this year by arranging a Chain of Prayer for Peace, in which the Moravian Brethren all over the world will participate. The first settlement of the Moravian Brethren was in 1457 in Kunwald (in the east of Bohemia) and in 1722 the Moravian Church was restored in Herrnhut by Count Nicolaus-Ludwig von Zinzendorf.

The Prayer for Peace was started in the west of Tibet in January in the Moravian Mission, and will be taken up by the churches in Jordan and Tanganyika. It will then pass to Czechoslovakia (the birthplace of the Moravian Brethren), be celebrated all over Europe, and then continued by the daughter churches in Africa. Next it will be the turn of the churches in Great Britain, who will pass it on via Labrador and Alaska to California. The chain of prayer for peace will then be resumed in Honduras and pass through Jamaica, finally reaching Dutch Guiana, where it will be closed by the mission church in Surinam in December 1957. The program is planned so that on every day in the year one church will be praying from midnight till midnight for peace in the world, for the continuance of the Christian Church, and for the growth of the Moravian movement.

E.P.S., Geneva

Challenges to Professor Hromadka's View of the Hungarian Crisis

Professor Joseph Hromadka's view of the Hungarian crisis (see EPS No. 1, 1957) has drawn comments from a large number of Christian papers. Misgivings are expressed by Stimme der Gemeinde, published in Darmstadt, by Martin Niemoeller, Gustav W. Heinemann, Heinrich Grüber, Herbert Mochalski and other well-known church leaders.

"We admit that Professor Hromadka is right in saying that events in the East and in the West would develop better in a peaceful atmosphere, that is, in an atmosphere free from disparaging and disintegrating propaganda," writes the editor of Stimme der Gemeinde. "At the present moment," the article continues, however, "we fail to see how the injustice and force used in certain countries such as Hungary can be condoned because of the risk of war."

Stimme der Gemeinde goes on: "Was it not precisely the communist workers, intellectuals and students who revolted against the regime, because they felt that its methods did not contribute to socialist construction but, on the contrary, were an obstacle in the way? Is it not true that something was extremely rotten in the state of Hungary?" asks the writer.

Remarking that there were many people in the West who were pleased about the Hungarian revolt "because of their dislike of Soviet Russia rather than because they were interested in the freedom of the Hungarian people," Stimme der Gemeinde adds: "But there were a great many others whose first concern was for the victory of justice, humanity and human dignity. They were not interested in any particular system, but in the sufferings of humanity."

The January number of the Protestant monthly Amt und Gemeinde, published in Vienna, also critically examines Professor Hromadka's statements. Referring to Professor Hromadka's allegations that the October revolution was aided by elements in the West, it says that silence is impossible following the "vehement attack" started by Professor Hromadka. "We feel," the paper says, "it to be an attack on our country, on its carefully-guarded neutrality, and on the help given by the West, including the Protestant churches."

Amt und Gemeinde asserts that Professor Hromadka has made "serious accusations without really determining whether they are true. We regret this," the writer says, "because it poisons the relations between churches whose members should be, and would like to be, brothers. We sympathize with our brethren in the East, who sometimes have to do things which must weigh heavily on their conscience. But they must preserve a degree of accuracy in their remarks."

In France the Protestant weekly Reforme poses what it calls "troubling questions"

arising out of Professor Hromadka's analysis. The first concerns the reliability of the information available to him. "It is disturbing to discover that the information given by Professor Hromadka not only contradicts that received by Western sources (that might be explained by the propaganda on both sides), but his information is also at variance with the personal accounts given by Hungarians who have escaped the misery in Hungary, who are not likely to hold reactionary convictions."

Reforme goes on to ask whether it is "impossible for a Christian whose thought is molded by Holy Scripture, if he lives in the 20th century, to detach himself from the ideological, political and social climate imposed by a particular regime, and to have sufficient spiritual discernment to interpret the facts without being influenced by slogans and propaganda?" The paper also declares that Professor Hromadka's statement raises the problem as to which comes first for man as seen in Christian terms - order or liberty.

The interdenominational British Weekly asks "if it is true that there was a strong element of fascist counter-revolution, why shoot or imprison or deport the Communist and Social Democrats who revolted with the rest of the people? Why not only fascist counter-revolutionaries? Dr. Hromadka makes some valid criticisms of the West and few would dispute them all, but the same criticisms are made forcibly and freely in the West. And it is inadequate to argue that the errors of the West are errors of policy and those of the Soviet sphere merely errors of administration and inexperience." E.P.S., Geneva

US and British Churches Exchange Letters After International Crises

Letters have been exchanged between the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America and the British Council of Churches about recent international events.

Writing on behalf of the U.S. Council on December 6, the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, president, said:

"We have followed your actions in these critical days with a deepening awareness of the community we find in the service of our Lord. We express our appreciation of your steady witness for peace with justice.

"As Christians in the United States we humbly recognize that we and our government share responsibility in and for the crisis in the world of nations. With you, we would reaffirm our confidence in the United Nations as the instrument through which the moral authority and will to peace of the peoples of the world finds appropriate and effective expression."

In a reply on behalf of the British Council of Churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury said:

"The British Council of Churches, and I personally, greatly appreciate the message of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America conveyed in the President's letter of December 6. The encouragement of that message derives both from your understanding of what we have in our Council striven, under God, to do in those perplexing days, and from the solemn pledge your message contains of common Christian fellowship. At a time when decisions and actions of the British Government have been sharply criticized by many in our country, the restraint and understanding courtesy shown by our American fellow-Christians are deeply valued; and on our side we endeavor to show the same restraint and courtesy when criticisms here are directed against the policies of your Government.

"It is salutary, however, to observe the sharpness of division in judgment on recent events found amongst British citizens. It reminds us how grave and difficult is the Christian task of finding how to reconcile in a true integrity the rendering to Caesar the things that belong unto Caesar and to God the things that belong unto God. To find the way of reconciliation is the task committed to our International Department in the formulation of policy and the guiding of the Churches."

Both letters also made reference to the growth of the bonds which bind the Church together through the World Council of Churches in a time of such international disturbance.

E.P.S., Geneva

Telephone Ministries Aid Hopeless

A 24-hour-a-day program of spiritual ministry by telephone has been launched in Stockholm, Sweden, by the Stockholm diocese of the State Lutheran Church.

By dialing a phone number callers can receive a personal message from one of a team of pastors assigned to answer the calls. The program, originated in Stockholm by the Rev. Berndt Backlund of the Laengbro parish, is actually the idea of a minister of the Swedish Mission Association, at Haelsingborg, the Rev. Erik Bernspaang. The 30-year-old minister is known as the "suicide pastor" because of his concern over the growing number of suicides in Sweden - 1,200 in the last year. His advertisement in local papers saying "before you commit suicide, ring Haelsingborg 12730" brought more than 300 calls. The number of daily calls shows no sign of abating.

The Stockholm diocese's "phone ministry" also may be adopted in the big industrial town of Oerebro if a proposal by Lutheran pastors there is approved by the local church council.

* *

Berlin also has a "Telephone Ministry"; since it was started last October it has brought help and consolation every week to over a hundred people in despair. By dialing No. 32 01 55, people who are ill or lonely can contact the Ecumenical Order of St. Luke which gives help to all who have lost hope. Bishop Otto Dibelius supported this telephone ministry by making an appeal entitled "no one need commit suicide this Christmas"; he urged the Christian churches to arrange special Christmas gatherings in Berlin on Christmas Eve for people who are lonely or who have lost hope. E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

Protest against Luther Film's Cancellation

Pressure from the Roman Catholic Church has been given as the reason why a Chicago television station cancelled the TV premiere of the film "Martin Luther".

Protestant churchmen have charged WGN-TV with "a violation of the freedom of the press," while producers of the film call the action "a real disservice to religious understanding." The film was scheduled to be shown on December 21, then was cancelled on December 20 to avoid, the station said, "ill will during a holy season."

At a January 9 press conference, Robert E. A. Lee, executive secretary of Lutheran Church Productions, said that before the film was cancelled "the station had already privately told us that it was at the receiving end of pressure from high Roman Catholic sources." Pending a review, a formal protest to the Federal Communications' Commission is planned against WGN-TV for banning the film.

A spokesman for the Chancery Office of the Roman Catholic archdiocese in Chicago said that it had made no formal protest to WGN. He declined to comment on charges by Protestant leaders that the station was vulnerable to pressures mobilized by the Roman Catholic Church. E.P.S., Geneva

HONG KONG

YMCA Secretaries Plan Strategy for Asia

Seventy-five laymen and secretaries from 12 countries discussed the theme "Serving Youth in the New Asia", at the fourth YMCA Conference for South and East Asia from December 10-20, near Hong Kong.

Special attention, for the first time in many years, was given to rural work, with half the conference members spending five days discussing the problem.

During the conference, the functions of the Area Committee for South and East Asia, a part of the World Alliance of YMCAs, were revised. The committee, among other things, will be expected to provide a forum for study and action on common concerns of national movements in the area and interpret the Christian mission and methods of the YMCAs in Asia.

New secretary of the World Alliance for South and East Asia is M. G. Dharmaraj, general secretary of the Nagpur YMCA and warden of the John Mott Hostel in Nagpur. He succeeds Dr. S. C. Leung, who retired from the post after seven years. At one time Dr. Leung was general secretary of the YMCAs of China. E.P.S., Geneva

A message addressed to parishes by the recently held 12th Synod of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren calls members of the Church to strive to preserve peace in the world.

"We cannot pass over in silence the circumstance that the 12th Synod met in days when the world was, and still is, going through a very dangerous and threatening period," said the Synod. "Because of human shortsightedness, selfishness and pride, the danger has arisen that the arduously built international authority will be undermined, that the slowly germinating confidence between nations will be stifled, and because of all this the barriers against dissolution and ruin would be opened."

The message goes on to affirm that it prays "for all parts of Christ's Church in our country and throughout the world, especially for responsible workers in the ecumenical movement: that they in their judgments and actions should not allow themselves to be swept by events and moods of the moment but should look to the deeper reasons of today's difficulties and dangers." It seeks intercession "for Christians to exert their influence on public opinion and the governments in their countries, for seeking peace without violence in controversial questions, and to work for a state of things in which nowhere in the world should people suffer from want, uncertainty of livelihood, lack of freedom, and therefore from hopelessness in life."

"We cannot pray for peace in the world and at the same time fail to be sons and daughters of peace," the message says. "From the Holy Scriptures we know that not every peace is right and good. We do not call for a peace based on indifference, irresponsibility and unwillingness to make a decision and bear the burden of struggle for a greater measure of truth, justice and humanity in this world. We are, however, called to live in the peace of those who do not fear the severest storm because they know the Lord who reigns above all storms."

E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

The Community of Agape within the Waldensian Church, the oldest Protestant church in Europe, will hold a series of work camps and conferences again in 1957. The international and ecumenical center built by international work camps will be completed by a tower. The programme for the year, which includes an international Bible study camp on "Jeremiah and Our Time" and meetings on dramatic art and sacred music, is available from the Segreteria d'Agape, Perrero per Praly, Torino, Italy.

* *

The Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service of the British Council of Churches has set May 6-11 as Christian Aid Week to inform the public of its world-wide projects for resettling and aiding refugees. Regional interdenominational committees in more than 200 centers already are at work on plans for the special week, which will become an annual observance.

* *

The Dutch Reformed Church will take a special offering in February for long term refugees who have lived in Austrian camps for many years. In calling for the offering, the Department for International Aid of the Diaconal Council of the Reformed Church pointed out that "our work in the international sphere has only just begun."

* *

Four Negro churches and the homes of two ministers, one white and one Negro, were bombed recently in Montgomery, Ala. It was the worst outburst of violence since the US Supreme Court banned bus segregation in the city in December. No one was injured in the blasts. Gov. James E. Folsom called the bombings "the work of anarchists" and offered a \$2,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the terrorists.

* *

The Methodist Church has launched its first World-Wide Prayer Movement with special New Year's Eve services in Bethlehem, Wesley's Chapel in London, and in Argentina, Japan, Yugoslavia and the United States. Goal of the movement is to have at least one person praying every minute throughout 1957 for peace, brotherhood and justice. For the last two years the denomination's Board of Evangelism has sponsored nation-wide prayer vigils.

* *

